



**PARISHIONERS' NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER/ CHRISTMAS 2024**



Pyracantha in the church forecourt - Brigid

www.allsaintsheadington.org.uk



Who's Who at All Saints

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<p>Garden Brigid Crofton Valerie Boulter John Macaulay</p>	<p>Welcome Team Valerie Boulter Veronica John Susan Newey Lucy Whitworth John Whitworth Alison Kempson William Marx</p>



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A Message from Paul

December

The leaves are gone: the nights are dark, it's colder outside and the shops are heaving.

The suppliers have Easter Eggs ready to go, alongside more hot cross buns.

Christmas specials were recorded for TV back in August, around the time the first "Seasonal" shelves were filled.

The credit cards are on overtime; as are parents trying to earn enough to keep warm.

Pensioners, alone, sit in single rooms that they can warm, and remember.

White vans roam the streets with parcels, directed by computers and sat nav.

School plays are rehearsed and rehearsed, as are choirs and musicians.

Pantos know their lines, moves and songs.

Wants and desires lists are posted on Amazon and Etsy and lots more besides

Trees await purchase and lights and baubles

Homes will be decorated and gardens adorned with lights of all kinds.

Santa will be written to and visited and selfies will be taken, to Grannie's delight

Socks and gloves, slippers and perfumes await being passed on to charity shops

Far too many will go without; homes, heat, food, love, and hope.

WHY?

Because over two thousand years ago, two homeless teenagers in a country far, far away were asked by God to raise His son to be child and man in order to live, speak, act, die and rise again, to then intercede for all who call upon him.

We remember this every week.

Once a year others join us.

Give thanks for all that we are honoured to know and believe, and Christmas will remain, as it always has been, and will be, Jesus' Birthday.

Happy Birthday, Jesus, and Happy Christmas to us all!

Paul



Worship in December



For many people our worship in December is the highlight of the year. Indeed, there are people who only come to church for one or two of our special Christmas services.

As well as the usual 10:00 am service each Sunday we have some other wonderful special services. In particular, our **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is at 6pm on Sunday 22 December**. Because of how the calendar falls this year, our Advent Carol Service is also in December, at 5:30pm on Sunday 1 December.

As normal at 4pm on Christmas Eve we will have our lovely **Crib and Christingle service** when we usually welcome a large congregation. It is particularly suitable for children and their families and lasts about 40 minutes.

Also, on Christmas Eve there will be a **Christmas Eve Communion at 7:30pm**. Paul has tried done this in other parishes, and it has proved a popular service instead of the Midnight Communion.

There will of course be our usual service of Holy Communion at 10:00am on Christmas Day.

This year December is a 'five Sunday month', so there are a lot of services.

Sadly, there is also the funeral service of our friend Sheila Fitzgerald at **11:30am on Wednesday 11 December**.

The All Saints' ministry team will also be leading worship in McMaster House, St Luke's Hospital, and The Headington Care Home.

On the last Sunday we will not have a Communion Service, but instead a more informal service of Christmas Carols. Paul will be on leave that Sunday.

I wish you all a happy and blessed Christmas.

James



Summary of Main Services in December

Time	Date	Occasion	Service
10:00 am	1 Dec.	Advent 1	Holy Communion - Rev. Paul Niemiec
5:30 pm	1 Dec.	Advent 1	Advent Carols and Readings
10:00 am	8 Dec.	Advent 2	Holy Communion – Rev. Paul Niemiec
11:30 am	11 Dec.	Funeral	Sheila, led by Rev. Paul Niemiec
10:00 am	15 Dec.	Advent 3	Holy Communion - Rev. Paul Niemiec
10:00 am	22 Dec.	Advent 4	Holy Communion - Rev. Paul Niemiec
6:00 pm	22 Dec	Advent 4	Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
4:00 pm	24 Dec.	Christmas Eve	Crib and Christingle family service
7:30 pm	24 Dec	Christmas Eve	Christmas Eve Communion - Rev. Paul Niemiec
10:00 a.m.	25 Dec.	Christmas Day	Christmas Communion - Rev. Paul Niemiec
10:00 a.m.	29 Dec.	Christmas 1	Simple service of Christmas Carols

James

The Lord's Prayer

My friend Stephen the Archbishop of York has told *Premier* he believes the Lord's Prayer should come with a health warning to emphasise its significance and power.

“Don’t say this prayer unless you’re prepared to make it part of your life,” he said, challenging people to think critically about their intentions, especially with phrases like “Your kingdom come” and “Give us today our daily bread.”

To help avoid reciting it on autopilot, Most Rev Stephen Cottrell advises believers to slow down and take it “a phrase at a time” to reflect deeply on its meaning. He notes that the prayer is brief — less than 70 words — but reflects what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus.

Paul



Peter Boulton-Lea

Last month we wished farewell to our dear friend Peter Boulton-Lea, on his move to Sherborne in Dorset, where he will be living very near his brother, and his brother's family.

Peter retired and moved to Headington about 15 years ago, after nearly 40 years of parish ministry in Durham, Chelmsford, Guildford and Sheffield dioceses. He was ordained as a priest in Portsmouth in 1972, and in 2022 he celebrated his 50 years as a priest with a memorable service in All Saints. He was for several years the Area Dean of Doncaster. As a single man he was in line for being asked to take on parishes in difficult areas and to move more frequently than clergy with families who are often, quite reasonably, reluctant to do.

Although Peter lived in the parish of Holy Trinity, the Archdeacon asked whether he would consider All Saints Church as his main attachment, as our then vicar, Jim Cocke, needed help. This he did, and for year after year he preached and celebrated at the 10 am service on at least two Sundays each month. He also helped at Holy Trinity Headington Quarry a good deal and had many friends there also. His role in our parish was especially significant in the last few years when we were in vacancy, during which his position as our Associate Minister became particularly important. He conducted a good number of funerals and a few baptisms, as well as leading our 10am Holy Communion service at least once a month.

November's newsletter drew attention to Peter's last celebration of Holy Communion at All Saints on 20 October. It was an emotional occasion for many who have known Peter for so many years, and we toasted his second retirement after the service. A week or so later, John and Carol called to see him to present him with a card and a cheque from the congregation in gratitude for all that he has done for us.

Peter has a calm and almost self-effacing manner, and many have appreciated the reverent way in which he celebrates communion. In his tribute to Peter, Paul drew attention to what he saw as one of Peter's many virtues, his authenticity, and many of us agreed that this was a good description of him. Those of us who had occasion to seek his advice and consolation in times of trouble, such as the loss of a dear friend, found in him a patient listener and a wise and compassionate friend. Peter has always been an intrepid traveller, and surely after he has settled into his new home it will not be long before he is off again on his adventures, exploring new places and making the most of his new life and retirement.

Janet and James



Sheila Fitzgerald

I was so sad to hear of the death of Sheila Fitzgerald. I have known Sheila for many years and served with her on the Social Committee. She was a quietly effective member of the committee and served as Treasurer from 2004 to 2021, and was also on the coffee rota with Joan Turner. She was a great cook and cake maker and could always be relied on for providing food for events organised by the Social Committee and especially cakes for the Christmas Bazaar stall.



We send our heartfelt condolences to Nigel and Claire at this sad time.

Carol



Remembrance Sunday



Mark Turner laying the wreath.
He served in the Green Jackets regiment
for three years.



“Mark reading the remembrance poem
‘They shall grow not old, as we that are left
grow old ... We will remember them’





Weddings and Funerals

All Saints had the privilege of welcoming large congregations to two special events in November.

On Saturday 23rd we welcomed family and friends of two members of the Oxford Chinese Christian Church, for **the marriage of Esther Chan and Jack Wong**. The marriage service was the beautiful Anglican wedding liturgy, obviously in English, and was taken by Paul. Before that there were songs, readings and prayers in Chinese, and a sermon in Chinese and English. (Paul didn't lead that bit!) There was some lovely singing, mainly in Chinese, during and after the signing of the marriage documents, and then to close the service Paul blessed the couple.

Things were very different at the end of the service. Instead of processing down the aisle, the couple stopped at the chancel steps, and this was when there were some speeches – just from the bride and groom. That's what is happening in the picture below.



After this people fell upon a delicious spread of sandwiches and cakes, which had been set out along several long tables in the south side aisle of the church. Meanwhile, the bride and groom posed with a seemingly infinite series of different collections of friends, relatives, bridesmaids and etc and etc for nearly TWO HOURS. By which time the tea was just about over, though there was a plenty left for them.



There were about 200 people present for this joyous occasion, and with the tables set out with food and drink, the church was very full.

A more sombre occasion also filled the church on Friday 15 November. **This was the funeral of Dr Robert Twycross.** He had been a very well-known local physician, and was medical director of Sobell House for about 20 years. I include two quotes from his obituary in the *Guardian* of 14 November: -

‘Robert Twycross, who has died aged 83, was a pioneering doctor in the field of palliative care. He helped build the speciality both in the UK and internationally, not only as a practitioner, but also as a teacher and author. His contribution to improving the care of the dying and those at the bedside is immense.’

And....

‘Hospice care, later to be called palliative care, at that time was in its infancy and surrounded by scepticism regarding its potential to contribute to healthcare. Robert was determined that patients at the end of life and their families should receive better care, and became a vocal advocate in the medical community.’

So, he was very well known in the medical world, but he also had a large family, and many friends, including folk from Holy Trinity Headington Quarry. (The funeral was not there as the church not large enough.) We had every chair in the church in action, which was 300. This was only a little bit more than enough, with about 260 people present. Like the wedding, this was also followed by a reception in the church, using a long row of tables down the south side-aisle.

James



Social Committee News

The next informal Britannia Lunch will be on New Year's Day, Wednesday 1 January 2025. I am assuming the Britannia will be open. Anyway enough time to check and make sure the weekly bulletin has the correct information if necessary.

Church House Management Committee meeting on Wednesday 8 January 2025 at 1.30pm in Church House.

Gift Day 2024

We have had another good Gift Day outcome. Many thanks to all who have made donations. The current total is c£19,500, made up of c£14,000 from the congregation and c£5500 from other Highfield/Headington residents and other friends and supporters -- some local and some from further afield. The total includes to date c£3000 in Gift Aid, already received from HMRC. This total is an excellent response in these difficult times.

In addition, as a PCC, we should like to take the opportunity to thank all the many members of the congregation who contribute on a regular basis, either through the monthly Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) or through weekly giving. The PGS provides an important element of stability to the church finances. This regular giving, together with the Gift Day donations, make vital contributions to the essential costs of running the church and contributing to our mission work locally, nationally and overseas. Thank you.

John

Collection of Used Postage Stamps

This is the time of year when we get the most mail, so we are again collecting used stamps to raise money for a Christian Charity. There is a box at the back of the Church for used stamps, they should not be damaged. We collect any foreign stamps, British commemorative stamps, any British stamps with pictures or actual price of the stamp BUT NOT the basic 1st and 2nd class stamps with the Queen's, or King's head. Thank you so much for all those who collected used stamps, we had a great number this year. Keep up the good work.

Carol



Visit of Beaver Scouts to All Saints

On Thursday 21 November All Saints hosted a visit from the 8th Oxford Beaver Colony, and a lively occasion it was. Paul guided the youngsters around the church, beginning at the west end where, among other things, he explained that we had a special event the following Saturday – a wedding! After some questions and answers he got the children to act as the bride walking (supposedly) slowly down the aisle to the accompaniment of Stuart playing suitable music on the organ. They looked at the IHS symbols in the ceiling of the choir and had a go guessing what the initials stood for. They then moved to the organ, and



wondered how Stuart was able to do so many things at the same time. James explained to them the significance of the Titanic memorial – and a surprising number had heard of the Titanic. Paul gathered them around the font and talked about what baptism meant and how he baptised babies and adults (the former with the aid of two dolls). A walk along the north aisle introduced them to the war memorial (Paul and James) before they ended up in the choir stalls again, where an intrepid James, having ascended into the organ loft, pointed out the different pipes. He prudently came down before Stuart treated the beavers to the full blast of the organ and a short recital. Paul donned what he called his ‘white frock’ (which caused some amusement) before the beavers marched back

down to the west end to the wedding march.

It was a joyous occasion. The beavers asked questions – and gave some interesting answers – and their leaders were wonderfully happy and smiling. We hope that they will come again.

Stuart provided hot chocolate and they in turn presented us with a card and chocolates, which will probably (by the time the newsletter comes out) have been enjoyed with coffee and tea after the service.





Janet



Oxford Street Pastors

NOVEMBER 2024



Malcolm's Story



“I became a street pastor because my wife Gillian became one and was so enthusiastic about her experience that I decided I could not miss out on all that she experienced. I also used to sit as a judge dealing with crime arising from the night time economy but had never experienced that world myself. I was fascinated by all involved whether the customers (young and not so young), the night club staff (very impressive), the food outlets (very friendly), the police (so grateful), the taxi rank marshals etc. Everyone was invariably pleased to see us. We

are able to do such valuable work demonstrating our faith in action.”



Ceremony of Thanksgiving & Commissioning

We recently held this ceremony at St. Michael at The North Gate in order to Commission new members of the team and to celebrate and give thanks for all those who help us carry out our work. We invited all of our team both past and present, and all supporters,

partners and those who help to fund us or otherwise enable us to continue to serve on the city streets. It was a well-attended and most enjoyable event which we will hopefully repeat on an annual basis.



**If you would like to find out more about us, or perhaps
are thinking of joining our team -**

Please get in touch, there is no obligation and we are happy to talk, email, message or meet with you! oxford@streetpastors.org.uk or 07910 758363. Take a look at our website: www.streetpastors.org/locations/oxford

1. You can chat to a current street pastor to find out what it is really like.
2. You can come out on a shift as an observer with no obligation at all.
3. Find out from our Coordinator what the training involves oxford@streetpastors.org.uk Note that costs are covered by the organisation.
4. Talk to your minister/ vicar and get a reference to go with your application form.

Once you decide to go ahead you can take part in training:

1. Completing the Roles and Responsibilities training day is the first step. Courses are run in the area every few months and this one is face to face.
2. Get into uniform and get going! Once you have done the training day then you will be able to go out on shift as a part of the team.
3. Other training modules can be completed when you have time. They include courses on mental health, alcohol and drugs and youth culture. We also learn about the local NightSafe partnership and our role in preventing violence against women and girls.
4. Once you have completed the courses you can be commissioned as a fully trained street pastor.

And finally.....We would be grateful for your prayers!

Please pray for our team as they undertake their weekend shifts, Christ's
work in action on the city streets.



From the Editors

We hope you have enjoyed this Christmas issue. As ever, we are indebted to all of you who have contributed articles and pictures. Your support and cooperation is superb.

In recent weeks we have said a very fond but reluctant farewell to Peter, who, as the churchwardens make clear in their tribute, has been a source of solace and strength to us all. On a personal note, we will always remember the beautiful way he conducted Brian's funeral; many of those present, who were from outside Oxford, remarked on his sincerity and sympathy. We will all miss Peter's reassuring presence and pray that he has a long and happy retirement in Dorset, although he has indicated, that once he has settled, he will be seeking the Bishop of Salisbury's permission to conduct services in the diocese. We will all be pleased at the thought that Peter will still be dispensing his wisdom and giving his empathetic support to worshippers in Dorset. In various exchanges of emails with Reverend Jim Cocke's daughters and son, we have received testimony of the great practical and spiritual support Peter gave to their father.

Sadly the passing of Sheila Fitzgerald led to more correspondence with Jim's family. They all recollected Sheila's friendship with their mother Margaret and her dedicated support of the Young Wives' Fellowship initiated by Margaret. We will be including further appreciation of Sheila, who was a much loved and valued member of our congregation, in our January issue. In the meantime, we ask you to remember Sheila and her grieving family in your prayers.

We also ask your prayers for those members of All Saints' who are unable to attend church due to infirmity. In particular, we remember Eve Vause, Joan Turner, Marian Loudon, and Audrey and Derek Woodcock. We understand that Phyllis Bolt is now in St Andrew's home for respite care (in the room adjoining Eve's), so please include our dear Phyllis in your prayers.

We are now entering Advent. The Theology and Religious Studies faculty at King's College London has a website providing a visual commentary on Scripture (www.TheVCS.org) which has an on-line Advent Calendar, offering a series of artworks and meditations on the gift of Creation. The website states:

'We live in a world that is far from what it should be but, for Christians, Advent affirms that, as God's promise and presence came into the world in the coming of the Christ child, out of love for the world, so God will again do a new thing, It gives us a vision for a restored creation where God's shalom, or peace, reigns.'

On that note, we wish you a peaceful and joyous Christmas,

Catherine and Catherine



Headington Singers

Conductor: Sally Mears

Wolcum Yole!

**Britten: Ceremony
of Carols**

**Shearing: Songs &
Sonnets**

Soprano: Clare Kirk

Harp: Anna Lockett

Piano: Maureen Cooper

Friday, 6 December, 2024 at 7.30pm

All Saints Church, Lime Walk, OX3 7AL

Tickets on the door £12 / £10 / children free

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